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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

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16 July 1985

Ms. Meg Greenfield
Editor of Editorial Page
THE WASHINGTON POST
1150 15th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20071

Dear Ms. Greenfield:

In its 16 July editorial entitled "CIA and FCC (Cont'd)" THE WASHINGTON POST misrepresented to its readers CIA's reason for filing its complaint with the FCC for redress against the American Broadcasting Corporation (ABC).

The POST's question, "Why has the CIA brought this case at all after a retraction was broadcast?" implies that the Agency's case was frivolous. The answer to the POST's question, as it well knows--and as anyone who has read the Agency's affidavit knows--is that ABC retracted only one of the many totally false accusations it broadcast in its two-part series last fall. Since ABC refused CIA's request that the network investigate and retract the many other falsehoods it conveyed to the American public, we asked help from the FCC. While the Commission did not support our request, one FCC commissioner characterized the ABC broadcast as "shoddy journalism." He added, "I think the First Amendment gives them (ABC) the right to be wrong, but they shouldn't be wrong to the extent they are an embarrassment to the profession."

All we have asked of ABC is that its reporting be factually accurate and where it is not, that a suitable retraction be made. The Agency and your other readers also have a right to expect that the POST will not attempt to mislead the public as to the Agency's reasons for seeking redress through the FCC in this case.

Sincerely,

George V. Lauder
Director, Public Affairs

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